

## **Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction in the ICT Sector: A Study of Gender Differences in Argentina**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this paper is to explore the profile of entrepreneurs from Argentina to investigate whether there are gender differences. In this sense, are established as core variables life satisfaction and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Thus, the study was conducted on a sample comprised a total of 329 entrepreneurs in the sector s Argentines Tics, of which 69% are men and 31% are women. The data, obtained by one-way ANOVA and regression analysis, show that men and women from Argentina present statistically significant differences in life satisfaction and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. In addition, when assessing the impact that has on life satisfaction and perceptions of effectiveness, we find that, too, there are notable differences between men and women. In particular, men need to feel satisfied with their lives to achieve success in undertaking, something that does not seem relevant in the case of women.

**KEY WORDS:** entrepreneurship self-efficacy. Life satisfaction. Gender. Argentina. ICT

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of "life satisfaction" is along the scale "quality of life", "subjective well-being" and "happiness", the defining themes of the theoretical approach known as positive psychology (Diener, 1994; 1998; Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith, 1999). Predominantly, it is considered a quality of life as a complex dimension, consisting of objective and subjective components relating to various areas of life (Cummins and Cahill, 2000). Wellness is the subjective component of quality of life concept (Liberalesso, 2002; Garcia and Gonzalez Viniegra, 2000), being composed of cognitive and affective aspects (Diener 1994; Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith, 1999). The affective component refers to the presence of positive feelings and happiness, while the cognitive component of welfare is the "life satisfaction".

Life satisfaction or cognitive component of SWB has been defined as the positive assessment by the person makes of his life in general or particular aspects of it (family, school, work, health, friends, leisure time) (Diener, 1994; García, 2002; Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith, 1999; Garcia-Vining and Gonzalez, 2000; Liberalesso, 2002). Thus, people evaluate their current status with future expectations they have for themselves, with the satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, the perceived gap between their aspirations and achievements (Viniegra and García-González, 2000; Veenhoven 1994). Consequently, rather than summing satisfaction from specific domains to obtain a general satisfaction, which is one possible path, "it seems more advisable to ask the person's own global assessment made of his life. More specifically,

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and Diener *et al.* (1999) have established a reference or comparison when making this assessment, as the desire to change one's life, overall satisfaction with current life, satisfaction with the past, the future satisfaction and satisfaction with how others evaluate our lives. A scale derived from this line of thinking has been used in different languages exist today, normative data (Atienza *et al.*, 2000) supporting their application.

The concept of self-efficacy refers to belief in their own abilities and skills to initiate and carry out activities successfully (Bandura, 1997). According to him, the process of creating and using the belief is quite simple and intuitive: people who are committed from a behavior, interpret the results of their actions and use those interpretations to develop beliefs about their ability to engage in behaviors subsequent similar domains. In this context, considers that the human capacity for self-reflection is more uniquely human capacity for this form of self-reference of thought to evaluate and alter both their own thinking and behavior (Bandura, 1987). Finally, these evaluations include perceptions of self-efficacy, which the author defines as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce certain achievements or results" (Bandura, 1999). This self-efficacy has significant relationships with job performance and emotional states (Gil-Monte, Garcia-Jueas and Caro-Hernandez, 2006; Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998), which result in the importance of beliefs as a predictor of success in what it takes.

Entrepreneurship, meanwhile, is being associated with technological progress (Moriano, Palace and Morales, 2006), for the ties and technological innovations in general, enhance and enable alternative self-employment. However, this phenomenon has been studied from different approaches. Traditionally considered the entrepreneur as an individual whose behaviors are determined by intrinsic characteristics rather than by external factors (Ahmed, 1985; Brockhaus, 1980; Cromie, 2000; Hull, Bosley and Udell, 1980; McClelland, 1965; Sánchez, 2003; Winslow and Solomon, 1989). However, there is no agreement on what their own personality traits of entrepreneurs (Chell, Haworth and Brearley, 1991). As in other areas of application of self-efficacy, research on entrepreneurial behavior are two different approaches (Moriano *et al.*, 2006). Thus, in one case, it includes self-efficacy in a broad and general sense, pointing to the belief or confidence in one's ability to perform successfully (Markman, Balkin & Baron, 2002), while from another side, the studies focus on the development of self-efficacy scales specific to the domain of entrepreneurs (Chen *et al.*, 1998). The scale used to measure the entrepreneurial self-efficacy is that of De Noble, Jung and Ehrlich (1999) known as Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy (ESE), there a Spanish version adapted and validated by Moriano *et al.* (2006).

Finally, the review of the literature on the gender is not conclusive as to the differences produced on these dimensions. For example, there is evidence indicating that the impact of gender on subjective well-being may be indirect, by exerting influence through other mediating variables (Hickson, Housley and Boyle, 1988). However, it is possible that the scales are more sensitive to the affective component to the cognitive and this explains in part the lack of evidence obtained about differences in life satisfaction (Costa *et al.*, 1987). In regard to gender and entrepreneurial self-efficacy in recent years, research has shown the predictive power of self-efficacy perceptions on the formation of entrepreneurial intentions, which self-efficacy is an intervening variable, both directly and through their influence by its association with other variables (Segal, Borgia, and Schoenfeld, 2005; Zhao *et al.*, 2005). Some authors have found higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in men compared with women (Chen, Greene, and Crick, 1998; Scherer, Brodzinski, and Wiebe, 1990). In the same vein, Sanchez, wool, Villanueva, and Yurrebaso D'Almeida (2007), significant differences in

variables autoficacia entrepreneurial men and women, linking this phenomenon to the increased male entrepreneurship. In particular, this study showed that men have higher entrepreneurial intentions than women, an explanation for this result appears to be in career choice: men and women selected university courses according to their preferences and their perception of ability. This presumably limits their perception of entrepreneurship. Finally, these data indicate no statistically significant differences between men and women in the locus of control.

Therefore, it is permissible to think that men and women differ in the ways of coping with their work contexts and also in self-perceived ability to take time. In this sense, it articulates the present study, which attempts to determine whether there are gender differences in perceived self-efficacy of men and women in Argentina. Similarly, it asks whether life satisfaction is a determining factor in entrepreneurial self-efficacy of the Argentines. To this end, the objectives of this research are:

1. Determine whether there are gender differences in perceived self-efficacy and life satisfaction of Argentine entrepreneurs tics sector. More precisely, we try to establish whether male or female in Argentina is an important element when undertaken. In this sense, not only inquires into the existence of such differences, but also its characteristics in the affirmative.
2. Determine whether life satisfaction influences the efficacy of Argentine entrepreneurs entrepreneurial sector differently tics. In particular, we want to know whether men and women understand that life satisfaction is an important element to successfully undertake and what are the characteristics of this relationship.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

We carried out a research paper that presents a descriptive and transversal. The total sample is made up of 329 Argentines and Argentine entrepreneurs, tics sector, of which 69% are men and 31% are women. The ages of them are between 15 and 68 years, with 27 years of age majority.

### **Instrument**

#### *Life satisfaction*

The tool used to measure life satisfaction derived from Diener (Diener *et al.* 1985 and Diener, *et al.*, 1999), using in this case, Spanish adaptation by Salvador, Britos and Hernandez (2007). This is a scale with five Likert-type scale questions with 5 points where 1 means "strongly agree" and the value 5, the opposite. The Cronbach alpha obtained for this scale is .802.

#### *Entrepreneurial self-efficacy-*

The tool used is the Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) from Noble *et al.* (1999) in the version in Castilian (Moriano *et al.*, 2006). In this sense, after subjecting the instrument to a validation process, the final edition contains 23 items with Likert-type scale of 5 points (1 "totally incapable" and 5 "perfectly capable"). The results in the coefficient of reliability are .93.

## RESULTS

To test the hypotheses is carried out an analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) and multiple regression analysis (method enter). In the first analysis is to determine whether there were significant differences between men and women in their life satisfaction (Table 1) and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Table 2). For its part, the second analysis attempts to determine whether the life satisfaction influences entrepreneurial self-efficacy of men and women Argentina (Tables 3 and 4, respectively).

Table 1. Analysis of variance of satisfaction

		Sum of squares	gl	Mean square	F	Sig.
The kind of life I looks like the kind of life I always dreamed	Inter-group	4.919	1	4.919	4.855	.028
	Intra-group	331.330	327	1.013		
	Total	336.249	328			
The conditions of my life are excellent	Inter-grupos	6.009	1	6.009	6.180	.013
	Intra-grupos	317.985	327	.972		
	Total	323.994	328			
I am satisfied with my life	Inter-grupos	6.134	1	6.134	6.749	.010
	Intra-grupos	297.222	327	.909		
	Total	303.356	328			
So far I have gotten the important things in life	Inter-grupos	.031	1	.031	.026	.873
	Intra-grupos	398.242	327	1.218		
	Total	398.274	328			
If I could live my life again. I want everything to return	Inter-grupos	4.229	1	4.229	2.903	.089
	Intra-grupos	476.324	327	1.457		
	Total	480.553	328			

The results in Table 1 show that life satisfaction Argentines statistically significant differences between men and women. More precisely, the findings show that changes emerge in the following items: "the kind of life I look like the kind of life I always dreamed of, ""the conditions of my life are excellent" "I am satisfied with my life "And finally," If I could live again, I would like everything to return to be equal".

Regarding entrepreneurial self-efficacy of men and women Argentina (see Table 2) also obtained significant differences. Thus, it appears that significant changes arising in "recognizing new market opportunities for new products and services", "find new ways to improve existing products", "identify potential new areas of knowledge", "develop appropriate planning staff for key positions in the company", " design products and services that solve common problems "and, finally," persist in adversity".

Table 2. Analysis of variance of entrepreneurial self-efficacy

		Sum of squares	gl	Mean square	F	Sig.
<b>Work effectively under continuous stress, pressure</b>	Inter-group	.935	1	.935	.650	.421
	Intra-group	470.573	327	1.439		
	Total	471.508	328			
<b>Develop and maintain positive relationships with potential investors</b>	Inter-group	.382	1	.382	.477	.490
	Intra-group	261.892	327	.801		
	Total	262.274	328			
<b>Recognizing new market opportunities for new products and services</b>	Inter-group	4.627	1	4.627	5.356	.021
	Intra-group	282.509	327	.864		
	Total	287.137	328			
<b>Recruit and train key employees</b>	Inter-group	3.620	1	3.620	3.685	.056
	Intra-group	321.183	327	.982		
	Total	324.802	328			
<b>Establish the vision and values</b>	Inter-group	1.748	1	1.748	2.148	.144
	Intra-group	266.142	327	.814		
	Total	267.891	328			
<b>Discover new ways to improve existing products</b>	Inter-group	10.165	1	10.165	15.635	.000
	Intra-group	212.589	327	.650		
	Total	222.754	328			
<b>Develop relationships with key people to raise capital</b>	Inter-group	.052	1	.052	.053	.818
	Intra-group	324.148	327	.991		
	Total	324.201	328			
<b>Identify areas of potential growth</b>	Inter-group	5.214	1	5.214	6.680	.010
	Intra-group	255.230	327	.781		
	Total	260.444	328			
<b>Develop appropriate planning staff for key positions in the company</b>	Inter-group	3.840	1	3.840	3.755	.054
	Intra-group	334.433	327	1.023		
	Total	338.274	328			
<b>Inspire others to accept the vision and company values</b>	Inter-group	.233	1	.233	.330	.566
	Intra-group	230.740	327	.706		
	Total	230.973	328			
<b>Tolerate unexpected changes in business conditions</b>	Inter-group	.976	1	.976	1.095	.296
	Intra-group	291.522	327	.892		
	Total	292.498	328			
<b>Design products and services that solve common problems</b>	Inter-group	14.012	1	14.012	15.261	.000
	Intra-group	300.237	327	.918		
	Total	314.249	328			
<b>Identify potential funding resources</b>	Inter-group	.252	1	.252	.262	.609
	Intra-group	313.554	327	.959		
	Total	313.805	328			
<b>Create a work environment that allows people to be her own boss</b>	Inter-group	.000	1	.000	.000	.983
	Intra-group	291.355	327	.891		
	Total	291.356	328			
<b>Persist in the face of adversity</b>	Inter-group	4.593	1	4.593	6.408	.012
	Intra-group	234.404	327	.717		
	Total	238.997	328			
<b>Products that meet the unmet needs of customers</b>	Inter-group	1.904	1	1.904	2.538	.112
	Intra-group	245.360	327	.750		
	Total	247.264	328			
<b>Develop a rapid action to pursue opportunities</b>	Inter-group	1.728	1	1.728	1.847	.175
	Intra-group	305.950	327	.936		
	Total	307.678	328			
<b>Develop a working environment that encourages people to try new things</b>	Inter-group	.858	1	.858	.996	.319
	Intra-group	281.519	327	.861		
	Total	282.377	328			
<b>Use old business concepts in a new way</b>	Inter-group	.511	1	.511	.571	.450
	Intra-group	292.328	327	.894		
	Total	292.839	328			
<b>Determine if business is good</b>	Inter-group	.303	1	.303	.367	.545
	Intra-group	270.098	327	.826		
	Total	270.401	328			
<b>Encourage people to take initiatives and responsibility for their ideas and decisions, regardless of their results</b>	Inter-group	.201	1	.201	.230	.632
	Intra-group	285.914	327	.874		
	Total	286.116	328			
<b>Identify and build management teams</b>	Inter-group	1.184	1	1.184	1.322	.251
	Intra-group	292.895	327	.896		
	Total	294.079	328			
<b>Form partnerships or alliances with other</b>	Inter-group	.065	1	.065	.069	.793
	Intra-group	304.859	327	.932		
	Total	304.924	328			

From the above analysis suggests, then, between men and women Argentine statistically significant differences in both life satisfaction as entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Subtract out now if life satisfaction influences entrepreneurial self-efficacy of men (see Table 3) and Argentine women (see Table 4).

Table 3. Regression analysis of entrepreneurial self-efficacy Argentine men

		<b>B</b>	<b>Error típ.</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>1</b>	Constant	2.998	.166		18.097	.000
	The kind of life I looks like the kind of life you always dreamed	-.023	.045	-.042	-.500	.617
	The conditions of my life are excellent	.090	.045	.161	1.985	.048*
	I am satisfied with my life	.074	.049	.131	1.510	.132
	So far I have gotten the important things in life	.031	.038	.062	.795	.427
	If I could live my life again. I want everything to return to be equal	.038	.032	.086	1.181	.239

Dependent Variable: *Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy* (\* p <.05)

With respect to Table 3 (Mean square = 1.21, F = 4,678; Significance = .000), ie the impact of life satisfaction in entrepreneurial self-efficacy Argentine men, there is first That life satisfaction is crucial in the perception of effectiveness in undertaking. Moreover, the data indicate that Argentine men to feel effective when undertaken is essential to have "excellent living conditions" (beta = .161, significance = .048).

Table 4. Regression analysis of entrepreneurial self-efficacy of Argentine women

		<b>B</b>	<b>Error típ.</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	Constant	3,427	.287		11.945	.000
	The kind of life I looks like the kind of life you always dreamed	-.044	.095	-.067	-.461	.646
	The conditions of my life are excellent	.076	.082	.118	.930	.355
	I am satisfied with my life	-.001	.085	-.001	-.007	.995
	So far I have gotten the important things in life	.128	.075	.220	1.704	.090
	If I could live my life again. I want everything to return to be equal	-.103	.074	-.182	-1.395	.166

Dependent Variable: *Entrepreneurial Self-efficacy* (\* p <.05)

Regarding the impact of life satisfaction in entrepreneurial self-efficacy of Argentine women (Mean square = .457, F = .973; Significance = .438), should note that, in this case, be satisfied with no life is critical in their perception of entrepreneurship. In other words, Argentine women entrepreneurs do not have to be satisfied with their lives believing that they can successfully undertake a project of its own business.

In summary, the data presented above reflect that men and women from Argentina present statistically significant differences in life satisfaction and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Moreover, when assessing the impact that has on life satisfaction and perceptions of effectiveness, we find that there are significant differences between men and women. In particular, men need to feel satisfied with their lives to achieve success in undertaking, something that does not seem relevant in the case of women.

## **Conclusion**

This research aims to deepen the study of gender differences in the behavior of entrepreneurs. In light of the analysis of the data and according to the tenets of certain works (Sanchez *et al.*, 2007), it is clear that there are significant gender differences. In this regard, it is concluded that the degree of satisfaction with life of men and women entrepreneurs in the ICT sector in Argentina is critical in their perception of self-efficacy.

More specifically, we can say that, as regards the first objective of this work, which was raised whether there are gender differences in perceived self-efficacy and life satisfaction of the Argentine entrepreneurs sector should highlight that indeed there are significant differences. These data, in a sense, are aligned with those of some authors (Chen, Greene, and Crick, 1998; Scherer, Brodzinski, and Wiebe, 1990) which state that there are gender differences in the perception of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. However, these findings are distant from the initial assumptions of the same authors, since they establish that men had higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy than women. Specifically, as seen in the next goal, this fact does not seem to be confirmed in this study.

Rather, these results are convergent with those reported by Salvador and Morales (2009). This author's work promoted in other Latin American contexts, where he discovered that men and women statistically significant differences in the characteristics of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Specifically, the main changes to recognize new opportunities arise for new products, recruit and train employees, find new ways to improve existing products, identify new potential growth area, develop an effective workforce planning, designing products and services solve problems and, finally, persist in the face of adversity.

To summarize the first objective, then it would make sense to emphasize that men and women take Argentine sector have different perceptions regarding their abilities. Then, these data come to question the tenets established by Cromie (1987), who found no significant differences between men and women in dimensions closely linked to the entrepreneurial process. Similarly, the fact that there are significant differences in life satisfaction from Argentina confirms the approach of Salvador, Britos and Hernandez (2005). These authors demonstrate the importance of the context seems to be the result and the performance of Latin America.

Regarding the second objective of the study, which tries to find out how much life satisfaction influences entrepreneurial self-efficacy of Argentine entrepreneurs sector. The data reflect the interest that seems to have this goal for both men and women. Furthermore, the results suggest that in the case of men entrepreneurs is basic life satisfaction, that is, who will be most effective when undertaken if they are happy in your life. However, in regard to women seems that this is not so important, we mean just that women are effective when undertaken without having to be satisfied with their life. In our view the fact that life satisfaction is not a determinant of entrepreneurial self-efficacy of women is of paramount importance, since the female sample size is considerably smaller than the male. Therefore, we should emphasize that this (life satisfaction, entrepreneurial self-efficacy) is a relationship that makes sense in light of the tests. In summary, the data indicate that men Argentine entrepreneurs have to be satisfied with their life to feel effective, something that does not happen in the case of women. This finding questions the hit by Sanchez *et al.* (2007), whereby men are more entrepreneurial. One possible explanation for this discrepancy may lie in the fact that the determination of male self-efficacy that is basic to know in depth the degree of satisfaction with life and even more, which is the central aspect of that male life satisfaction. Moreover, it

is possible that data from both our study and those obtained in the work done by Sánchez *et al.* (2007) are pointing to something similar, however, should further deepen the detailed and exhaustive analysis of the psychosocial variables that are shaping the profile of the entrepreneur.

It is therefore important to note that this paper offers only partial support for gender differences in the profile of entrepreneurs in general. Still, it is understood that this is an important aspect since, if necessary interventions for the primary purpose of training new Argentine entrepreneurs in the ICT sector, should be trained differently to men and women, as attentive to what these results indicate, the same training program would not be equally effective in both cases. Nevertheless, as the main strength of this research is worth noting that they are taking into account contextual variables and personal variables in the profile of the entrepreneur (Athayde, 1999; Thompson, 1999). In other words, some authors, for example Ataide (1999), indicate that to know the profile of entrepreneurs have to consider the idiosyncrasies of the context and at the same time, their way of life of people, and these aspects that considered in this investigation.

In any case, these data should be taken with caution, because this research has some limitations that hinder its widespread use. Specifically, the sample size and profile of the sample (tics sector) are the highlights. Therefore, it is deemed convenient to continue working in this line in order to deepen the understanding of the profile of Argentine entrepreneurs in general.

As a final conclusion of this research, is important to note that at the time of being an entrepreneur in the ICT sector in Argentina, being a man or woman has significant consequences. It is not considered a genre prevail over another, but to argue that men and women have profiles of different entrepreneurial self-efficacy, each of which will best suit certain situations. In short, gender is again an element to consider.

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